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James

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(54) **THERMAL ATTACHMENT BRACKET FOR MINI CARTRIDGE PACKAGE TECHNOLOGY**

(75) Inventor: **Gregory A. James**, San Jose, CA (US)

(73) Assignee: **Intel Corporation**, Santa Clara, CA (US)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

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(22) Filed: **Oct. 20, 2000**

Related U.S. Application Data

(62) Division of application No. 09/229,394, filed on Jan. 11, 1999, now Pat. No. 6,163,455.

(51) **Int. Cl.**⁷ **H05K 7/20**

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **361/704; 361/707; 361/712; 361/719; 257/718; 257/719; 257/726; 257/727; 174/16.3; 165/104.33; 165/185**

(58) **Field of Search** **361/702-704, 361/707, 712, 713, 715, 719; 257/718, 719, 721, 722, 727; 174/16.1, 16.3; 165/80.2, 80.3, 185**

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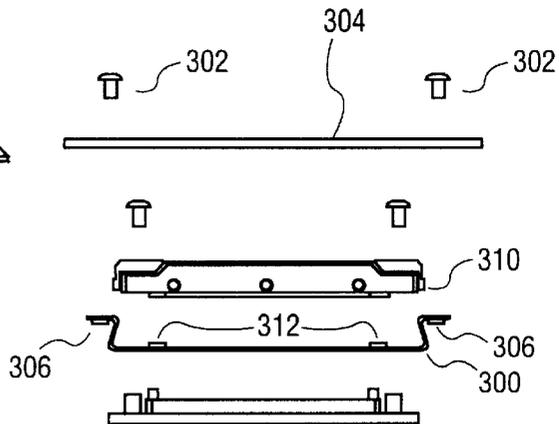
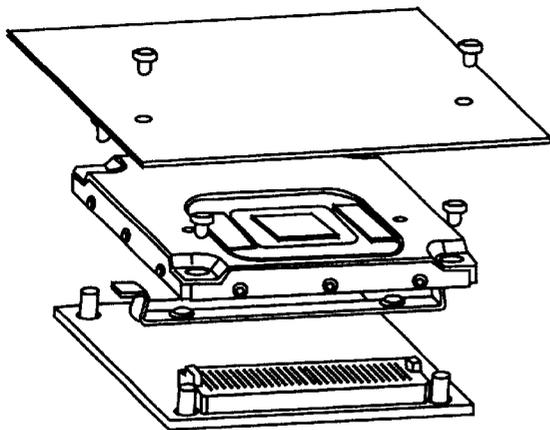
Primary Examiner—Boris Chervinsky

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm*—Blakely, Sokoloff, Taylor & Zafman LLP

(57) **ABSTRACT**

An apparatus is disclosed for attaching a thermal solution to a mini-cartridge. The apparatus comprises: a bracket adapted to be snapped into position around the mini-cartridge; two or more threads formed in the bracket, the threads positioned such that when the bracket is snapped into position around the mini-cartridge the threads are located on the side of the mini-cartridge opposite from the side adjacent to the thermal solution; and screws adapted to run through holes in the mini-cartridge to engage with the threads and to fixedly attach the thermal solution to the mini-cartridge.

6 Claims, 9 Drawing Sheets



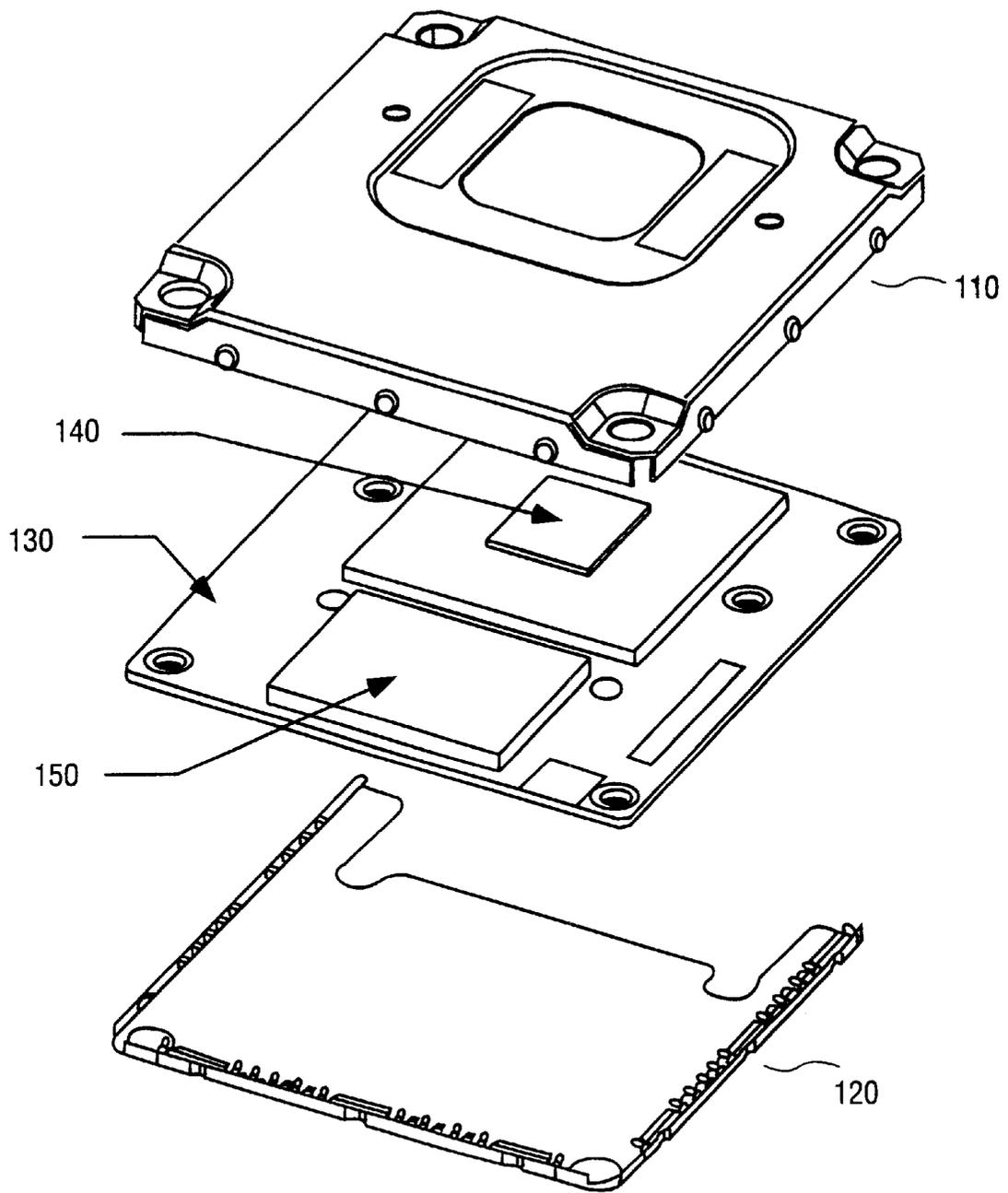


FIG. 1
(PRIOR ART)

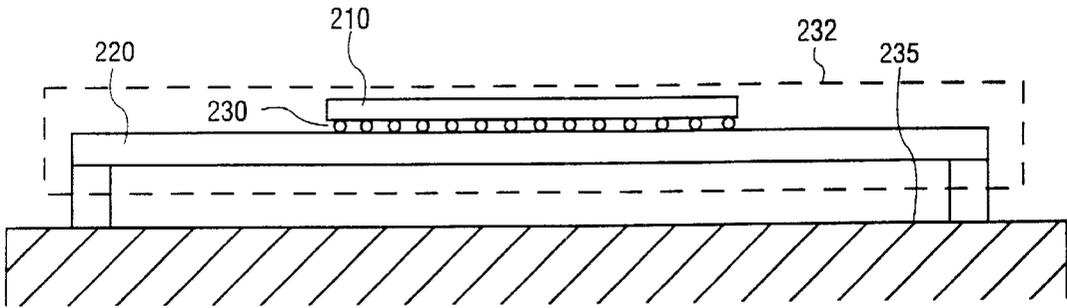


FIG. 2A

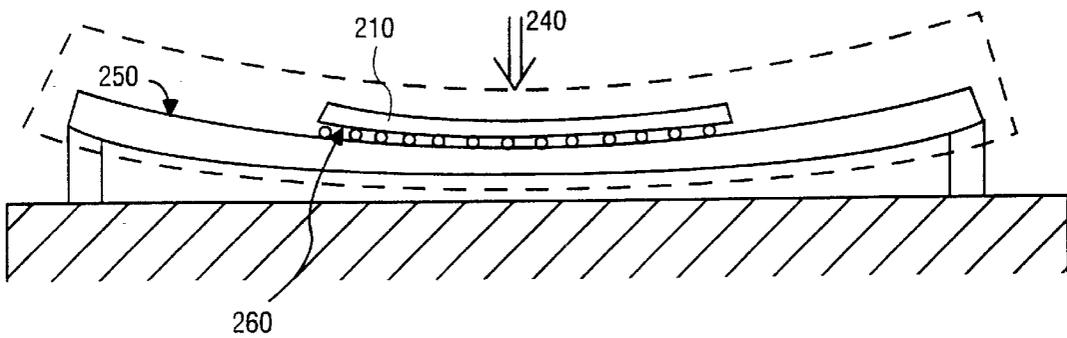


FIG. 2B

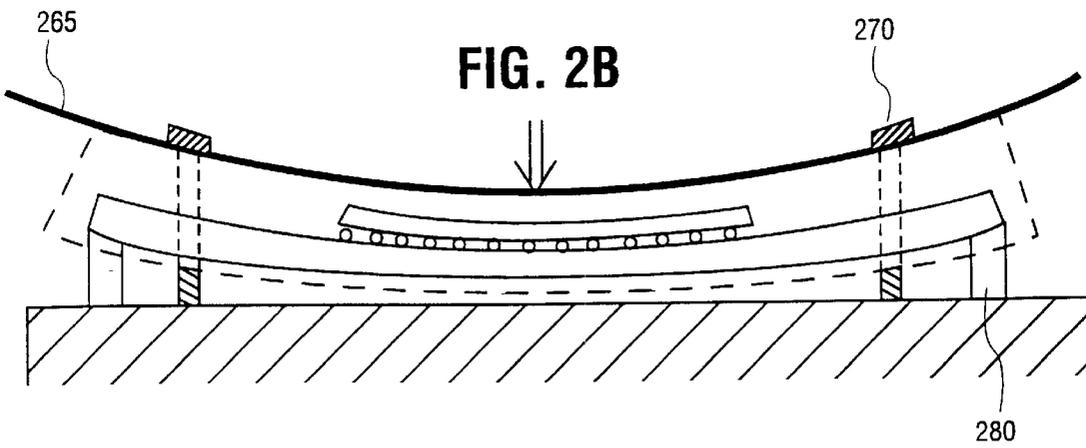


FIG. 2C

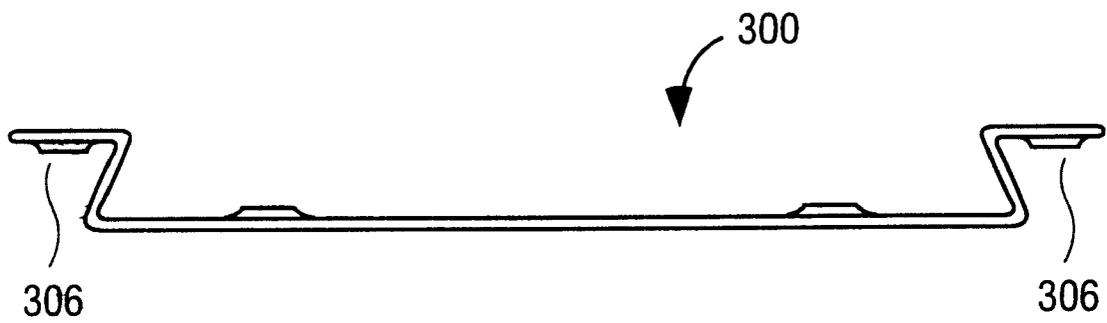


FIG. 3A

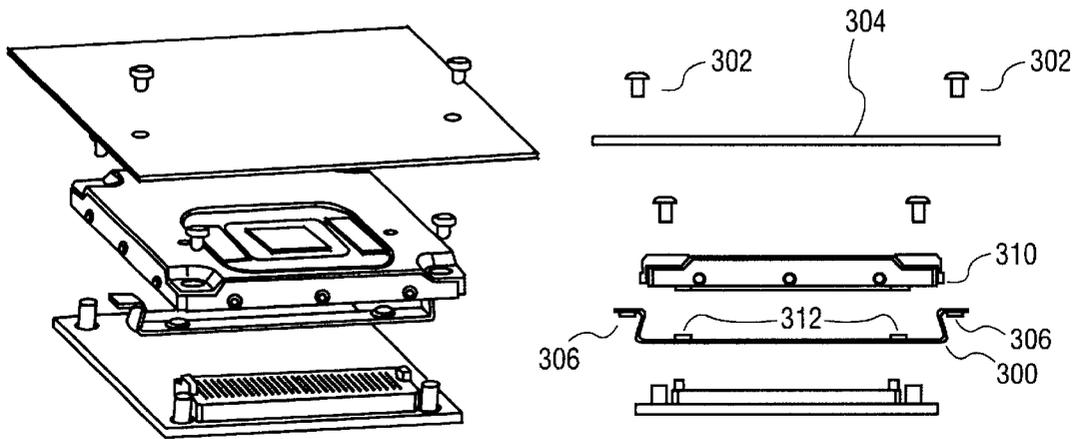


FIG. 3B

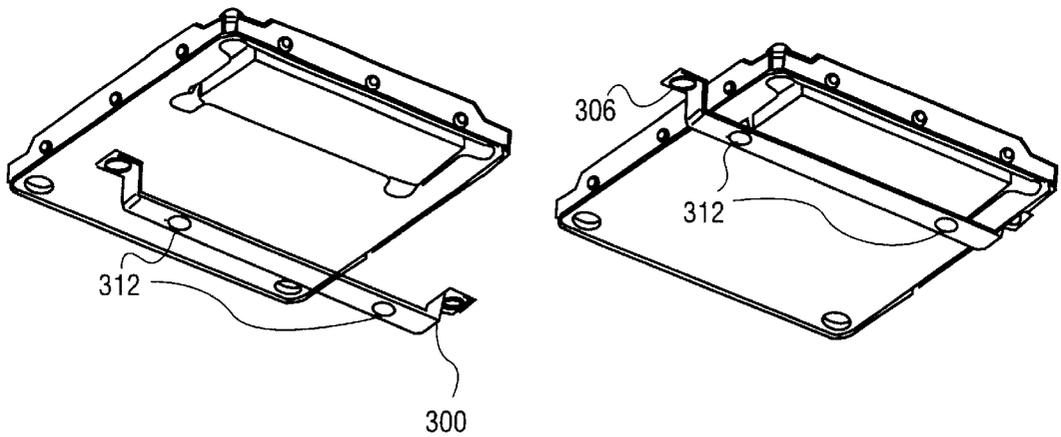


FIG. 3C

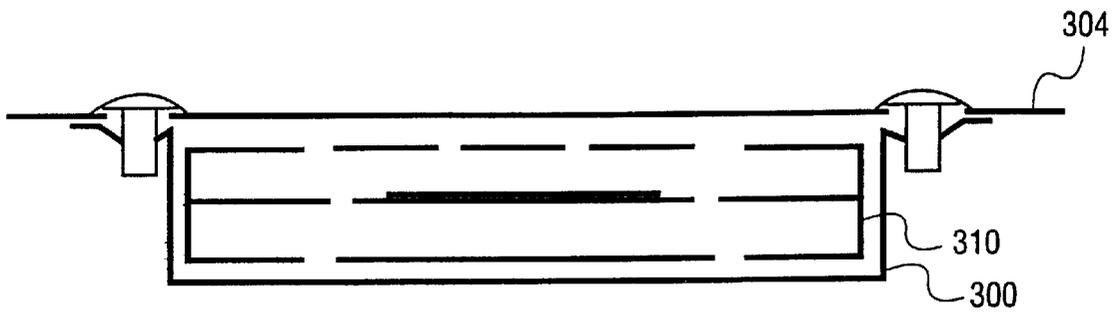


FIG. 3D

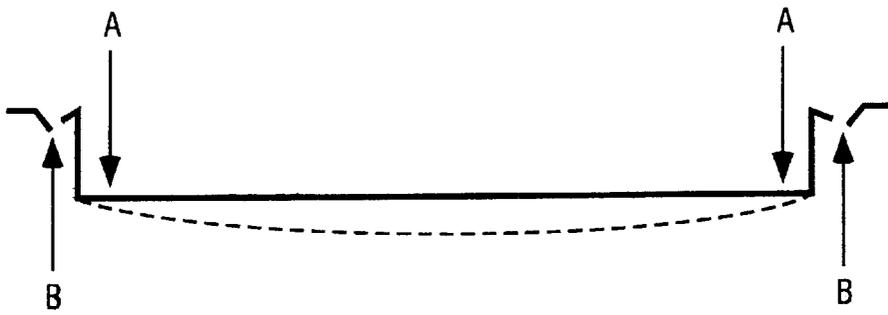


FIG. 3E

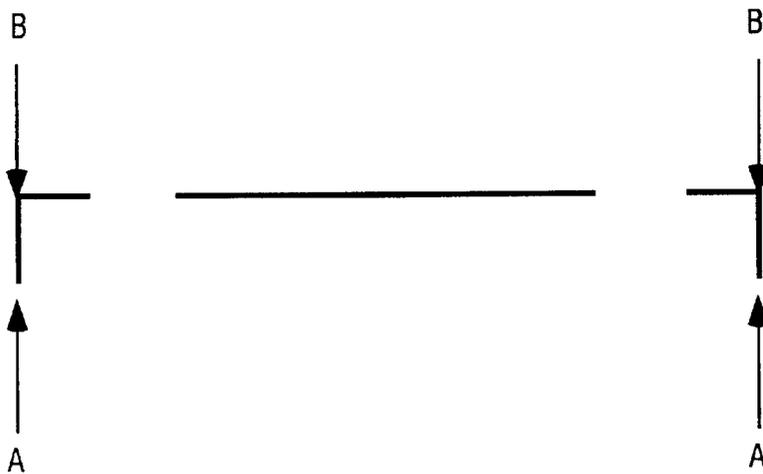


FIG. 3F

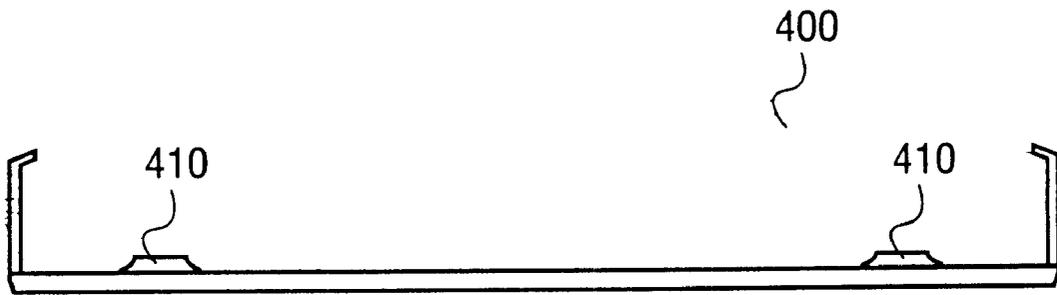


FIG. 4A

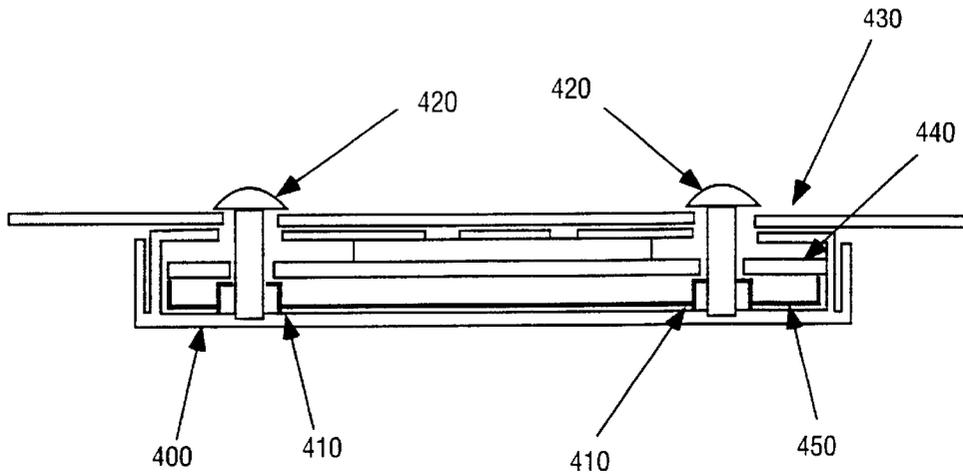


FIG. 4B

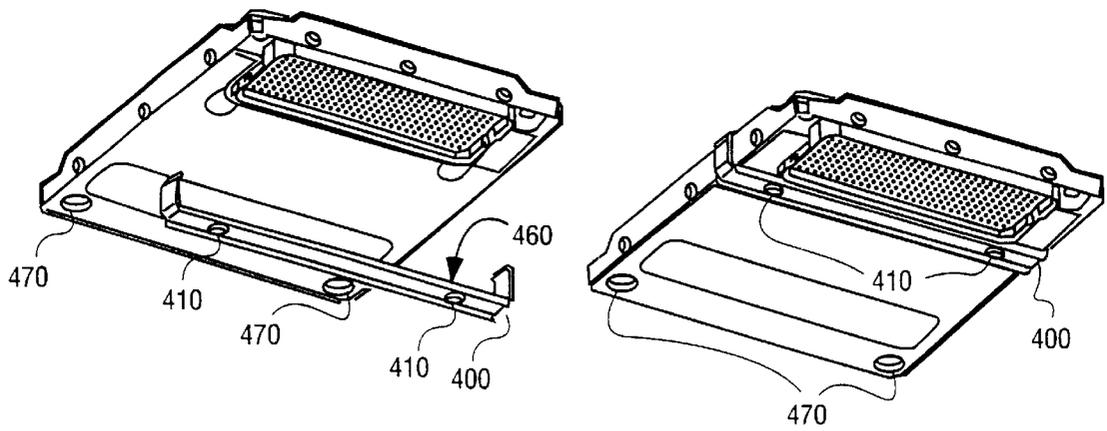


FIG. 4C

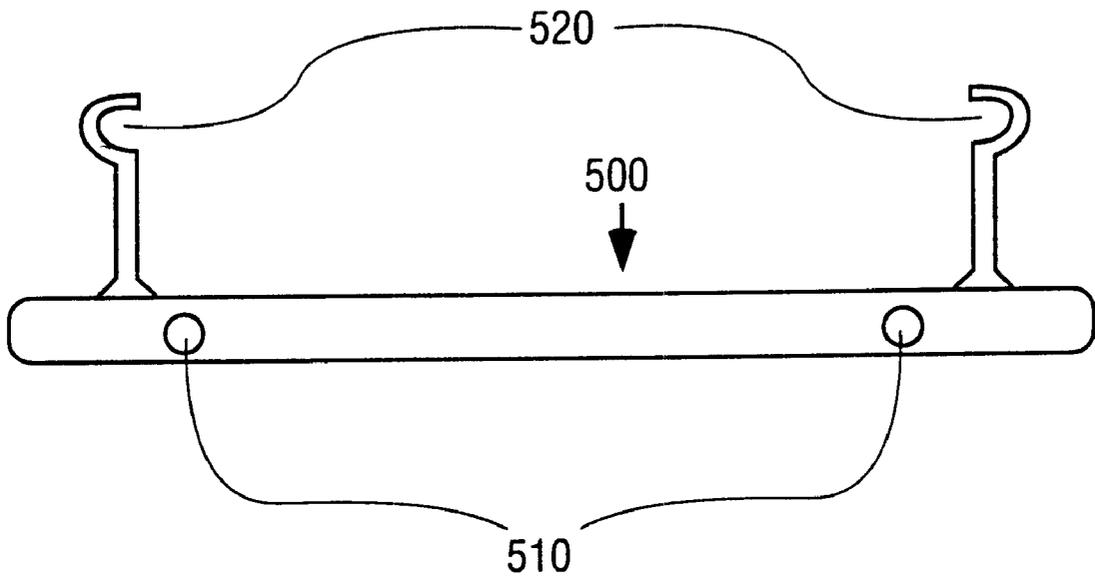


FIG. 5A

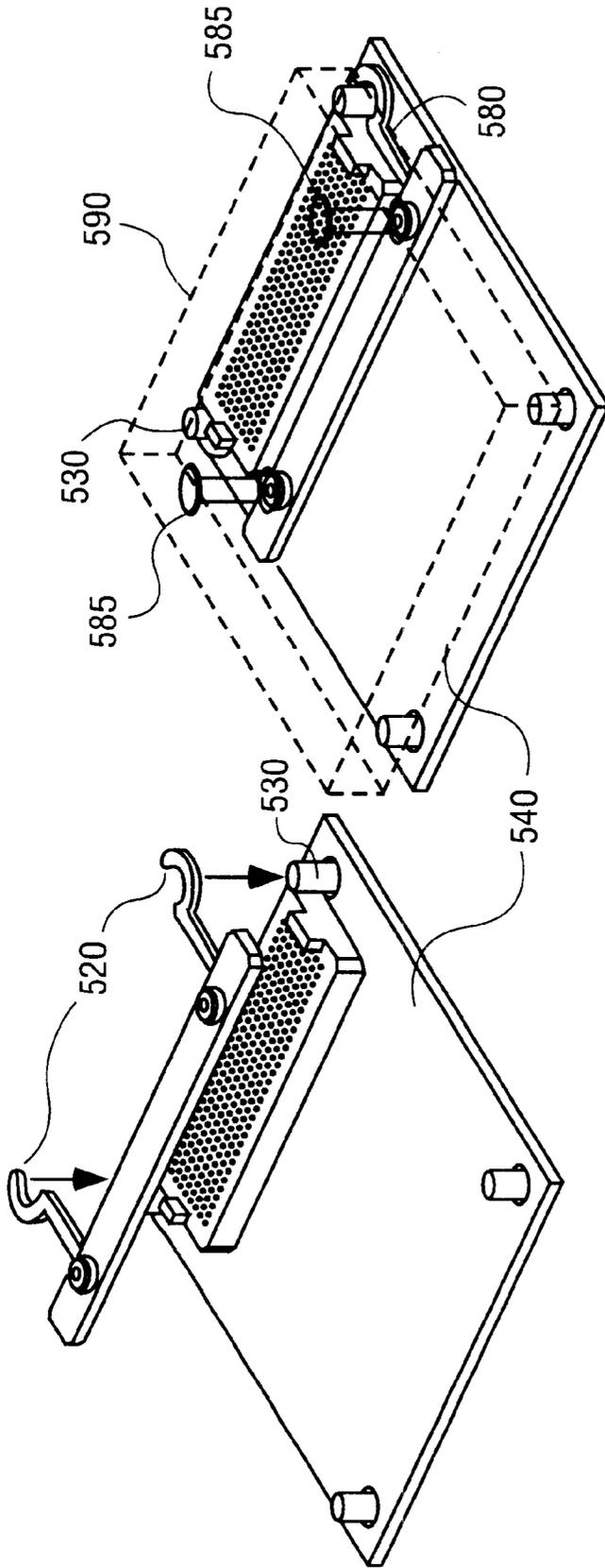


FIG. 5B

THERMAL ATTACHMENT BRACKET FOR MINI CARTRIDGE PACKAGE TECHNOLOGY

This is a divisional of application, Ser. No. 09/229,394, filed Jan. 11, 1999. Now U.S. Pat. No. 6,163,455.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates thermal attachment design. More particularly, the invention relates to an improved apparatus for securing a thermal solution or other cooling device to a mini-cartridge device.

2. Description of the Related Art

A mini-cartridge is a packaging technology designed to protect the electronic components of a printed circuit board (hereinafter "PCB") and to aid in controlling the thermal interface between the PCB and a thermal attachment (e.g., a heat-sink). As illustrated in FIG. 1, one embodiment of a mini-cartridge includes a top cover **110** and a bottom cover **120** which, when attached, surround the PCB substrate **130** and its electronic components (e.g., **140**, **150**).

The mini-cartridge not only protects the PCB but also provides an interface for connecting the PCB to external electronic components. For example, when a mini-cartridge is provided for a microprocessor and its related circuitry, the cartridge can be secured to a motherboard simply by inserting the cartridge into a motherboard-mounted connector, rather than permanently soldering the mini-cartridge to the motherboard. The mini-cartridge thereby provides protection for the underlying microprocessor and also provides a simplified system for replacing the microprocessor (e.g., in the event that it malfunctions or becomes obsolete).

Electronic components such as microprocessor **210** may dissipate a significant amount of heat. Therefore, when a microprocessor **210** or other high-speed electronic component is secured within a mini-cartridge as described above, a heat dissipation mechanism is required. Otherwise the increased heat trapped within the cartridge could degrade processor performance and/or damage the processor.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An apparatus is disclosed for attaching a thermal solution to a mini-cartridge. The apparatus comprises: a bracket adapted to be snapped into position around the mini-cartridge; two or more threads formed in the bracket, the threads positioned such that when the bracket is snapped into position around the mini-cartridge the threads are located on the side of the mini-cartridge opposite from the side adjacent to the thermal solution; and screws adapted to run through holes in the mini-cartridge to engage with the threads and to fixedly attach the thermal solution to the mini-cartridge.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

A better understanding of the present invention can be obtained from the following detailed description in conjunction with the following drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 illustrates a top cover and a bottom cover of a mini-cartridge device.

FIG. 2A illustrates a mini-cartridge secured to a motherboard.

FIG. 2B illustrates a mini-cartridge with a force applied to its external surface.

FIG. 2C illustrates a thermal solution secured to a mini-cartridge by attachment to a motherboard.

FIG. 3A illustrates one embodiment of a thermal attachment bracket for securing a thermal solution to a mini-cartridge.

FIG. 3B illustrates the embodiment of the thermal attachment bracket of FIG. 3A about to be secured to a thermal solution and a mini-cartridge.

FIG. 3C illustrates the embodiment of the thermal attachment bracket of FIG. 3A positioned below a mini-cartridge.

FIG. 3D illustrates the embodiment of the thermal attachment bracket of FIG. 3A secured to a thermal solution.

FIG. 3E illustrates a free body diagram of the thermal attachment bracket of FIG. 3D when secured to thermal solution.

FIG. 3F illustrates a free body diagram of the mini-cartridge of FIG. 3D.

FIG. 4A illustrates an embodiment the thermal attachment bracket for securing a thermal solution to a mini-cartridge.

FIG. 4B illustrates a side view of the thermal attachment bracket of FIG. 4A attached to a thermal solution.

FIG. 4C illustrates the thermal attachment bracket of FIG. 4A positioned below a mini-cartridge.

FIG. 5A illustrates one embodiment of the thermal attachment bracket for securing a thermal solution to a mini-cartridge.

FIG. 5B illustrates the thermal attachment bracket of FIG. 5A positioned above a motherboard.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

What is needed is an improved apparatus for attaching a thermal solution to a mini-cartridge. What is also needed is a thermal attachment apparatus which will place minimal stress on the printed circuit board ("PCB") and associated electronic components secured within the mini-cartridge. What is also needed is an apparatus which will provide for simple attachment and detachment of the mini-cartridge to a motherboard. What is also needed—particularly for mobile mini-cartridge applications (i.e., within a notebook or laptop computer)—is a thermal attachment apparatus which will occupy a limited amount of space around the mini-cartridge to which it is attached.

The PCB substrate **130** illustrated in FIG. 1 may be populated on both sides with different microprocessor components. These components are frequently surface-mounted to the PCB using Ball Grid Array technology (hereinafter "BGA-technology") connections. As shown in FIG. 2A, using BGA-technology a microprocessor **210** (or other electronic component such as cache memory) may be electronically connected to a PCB substrate **220** using a grid of solder balls **230**. BGA connections are known for their compact size, high lead count and low inductance, all of which provide for lower voltage implementations.

The PCB and associated microprocessor illustrated in FIG. 2A is shown surrounded by a mini-cartridge **232** and mounted to a motherboard surface **235**. Additional electrical connections between the mini-cartridge **232**, PCB **220**, microprocessor **210** and motherboard surface **235** are not illustrated in FIG. 2A because they are not necessary for an understanding of the present thermal attachment solution.

BGA connections, while providing the benefits described above, are particularly susceptible to damage due to warpage of the PCB. As illustrated in FIG. 2B, if a force **240** is

applied to one side of the mini-cartridge, both the PCB **220** and microprocessor **210** will bend along with the mini-cartridge **232** in the direction of the force (i.e., towards motherboard surface **235**). As a result, the lower surface of the microprocessor **260** and the top surface of the PCB **250** will induce shear stresses on the solder balls **230** due to the change in relative positions of the two surfaces **250** and **260**. This may lead to failure of the microprocessor and/or increased susceptibility to environmental stresses.

As shown in FIG. 2C, one method for attaching a thermal solution **265** is to connect it to the motherboard **235** using screws **270** which are inserted through holes in the mini-cartridge **232**. As can be seen from FIG. 2C, however, this method of attachment can produce the same type of warpage and shear stress on the solder balls **260** as those illustrated in FIG. 2B if the screws **270** are over-torqued. This type of warpage may be more attenuated when the thermal attachment screws are positioned near the mini-cartridge/motherboard mounting points **280**.

One possible solution to the warpage problem is to tightly control the relative heights of the thermal attach screws **270** and the flatness of the motherboard into which they are captured. However, this method is expensive and may not be achievable in practice.

A better solution is to provide a thermal attachment bracket **300** as illustrated in FIG. 3A. The bracket **300** is shaped so that it can be easily snapped into position around the mini-cartridge. A set of threads **306** are formed in the bracket **300**. As shown in FIG. 3B, the threads **306** provide the engagement for matching threads of screws **302** used to secure a thermal solution **304** to the mini cartridge **310**.

The thermal solution **304** and the thermal attachment bracket **300** of this embodiment are directly connected to one another outside of the periphery of the mini-cartridge package as shown in FIG. 3B. That is, the portion of the bracket **300** on which the threads **306** reside is formed such that when the thermal solution **304** is placed in position next to the mini-cartridge **310**, the thermal solution **304** is directly adjacent to the portion of the bracket **300** which includes the threads **306**. The thermal solution **304** includes holes which align with the threads **306** in the bracket **300** (through which the screws **302** will be inserted to secure the thermal solution **304**).

This embodiment of the thermal attachment bracket **300** may also include one or more protrusions **312** (e.g., thread bosses that extrude upward from the bracket as shown in FIGS. 3B and 3C). The protrusions **312** match up with apertures in the mini-cartridge and are used to accurately position the thermal attachment bracket **300** around the mini-cartridge before the thermal solution **304** is attached. Alternatively, apertures may be formed in the bracket and protrusions (or other positional elements) may be formed on the mini-cartridge.

FIG. 3D is an illustration of the thermal attachment bracket **300** in position, securing the thermal solution **304** to the mini-cartridge **310**. FIG. 3E, which corresponds to FIG. 3D, is a free body diagram illustrating the two forces, force A **320** and force B **325** which act on the thermal attachment bracket **300** when connected to the thermal solution **304**. The two forces **320** and **325** may cause the thermal attachment bracket to bend slightly as shown. However, as illustrated in FIG. 3E—a free body diagram of the forces acting on the mini-cartridge itself—the two forces, A **320** and B **325**, act in direct opposition to one another. Accordingly, the present embodiment of the thermal attachment bracket **300** secures the mini-cartridge **310** to the thermal solution **304**

without bending the mini-cartridge as does the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 3C. As a result, the BGA connection between the PCB and the microprocessor (and/or other electrical components) is no longer subject to a potentially damaging shearing force and the microprocessor-PCB connection is less likely to be damaged.

A second embodiment of a thermal attachment bracket **400** is illustrated in FIG. 4A. The threads **410** of the thermal attachment bracket **400** are positioned so as to be located on the secondary side of the mini-cartridge **450** (i.e., the side opposite the thermal solution **430**) when attached to the thermal solution **430**. As illustrated in FIG. 4B, screws **420** which secure the thermal solution **430** extend through the mini-cartridge **450** to engage the threads **410** on the other side. The screws **410** are then torqued to a specified value (e.g., 2 inch-lbs.) to secure the assembly together. A PCB **440** on which a processor may be communicatively coupled is also illustrated in FIG. 4b (i.e., disposed within a mini-cartridge **450**).

The threads **410** of the present embodiment are sized to contact the secondary side of the mini-cartridge **450** to provide a hard-stop point of leverage for the securing screws **420** to be torqued against. The rails **460** of the present embodiment provide high stiffness such that the securing screws **420** can be sufficiently torqued without excessively bending the bracket **400** and/or damaging the mini-cartridge.

The present embodiment of the thermal attachment bracket **400** is illustrated being snapped into position around the mini-cartridge in FIG. 4C. Also illustrated in FIG. 4c is a set of holes **470** in the mini cartridge **450** through which screws may be inserted (not shown) to secure the mini-cartridge **450** to a motherboard (not shown). By floating a thermal attachment bracket **400** with a set of threads **410** below the mini-cartridge as described, the mechanical stresses on the mini-cartridge illustrated in FIG. 2C are minimized. As a result, mechanical mounting and thermal attachment of the mini-cartridge is achieved while minimizing the risk to on board components. Another embodiment of the thermal attachment bracket **500** is illustrated in FIG. 5. Like the previous embodiment, the threads **510** of this embodiment are positioned so as to be located on the secondary side of the mini-cartridge (i.e., the side opposite the thermal solution) when attached to the thermal solution.

The primary difference between this embodiment and the previous embodiments is the way in which the thermal attachment bracket **500** is positioned with respect to the mini-cartridge before the thermal solution is attached. Specifically, the previous two thermal attachment brackets snapped into position around the mini-cartridge before the thermal solution was attached. By contrast, as illustrated in FIG. 5B, the attachment bracket **500** initially rests on the motherboard **540** and is positioned by two positioning arms **520** which reference one or more elements **530** on the motherboard. Thus, when rested on the motherboard **540**, the threads **510** of the present thermal attachment bracket **500** are positioned directly below holes **580** in the mini-cartridge **590** through which screws **585** are applied to secure the thermal solution (as described above with respect to the previous embodiment).

It should be noted that the different embodiments of thermal attachment threaded brackets described herein can be manufactured using various manufacturing techniques including, for example, injection-molding plastic, forming from sheet metal, and injection molding or casting of metal. Moreover, one of ordinary skill in the art will readily recognize from the following discussion that alternative

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embodiments of the structures and methods illustrated herein may be employed without departing from the principles of the invention. Throughout this detailed description, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the present invention. It will be appreciated by one having ordinary skill in the art, however, that the present invention may be practiced without such specific details. In other instances, well known structures have not been described in detail in order to avoid obscuring the subject matter of the present invention. The invention should, therefore, be measured in terms of the claims which follow.

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus for attaching a thermal solution to a mini-cartridge comprising:

a bracket;

one or more positioning elements formed on the bracket for positioning the bracket on a motherboard, the positioning elements adapted to correspond with one or more elements on the motherboard;

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two or more threads formed in the bracket, the threads positioned such that when the bracket is positioned on the motherboard and a mini-cartridge is attached to the motherboard, the threads align with holes in the mini-cartridge and are located directly adjacent to the thermal solution; and

screws adapted to run through the holes in the mini-cartridge to engage with the threads and to fixedly attach the thermal solution to the mini-cartridge.

2. The apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein the bracket is formed from sheet metal.

3. The apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein the bracket is formed from injection-molding plastic.

4. The apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein the bracket is formed from injection-molding of metal.

5. The apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein the bracket is formed from the casting of metal.

6. The apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein the mini-cartridge contains a microprocessor residing on a PCB.

* * * * *